

DDI-758-63

63-1743

General Earle G. Wheeler, USA  
Chief of Staff, U. S. Army  
Room 34668, The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear General Wheeler:

The United States Intelligence Board has before it a draft National Intelligence Estimate entitled "Prospects for South Vietnam." This paper is obviously one of highest importance. It is my desire that final action on this estimate not be taken until members of the Board and the relevant experts of the intelligence community have had an opportunity to discuss with you a number of the most important judgments now tentatively set forth in the draft.

I hope it will be possible for you to give us an hour of your time in the near future. If you are able to accept, would you ask someone in your office to get in touch with Mr. Sherman Kent, Chairman of my Board of National Estimates, to arrange an appropriate time and place?

Mr. Hilsman and Mr. Forrestal who, as you know, have recently visited Vietnam, have agreed to give us their on-the-spot observations at another session. I am also asking General Krulak to be available for a similar conference. General Carroll has cabled General Harkins and Admiral Felt asking their comments on key passages of the estimate, and Mr. Hilsman is doing the same for Ambassador Nolting.

I am attaching a copy of the draft estimate and a statement of three crucial areas on which I would particularly welcome your views.

Sincerely,

John A. McCone  
Chairman

attachments

300331

**NOTE FOR GENERAL WHEELER**

**RE: Attached draft National Intelligence Estimate  
on South Vietnam (NIE 53-63)**

The most important judgments of an estimate  
of South Vietnam at this time concern:

(a) the relative importance of the military  
and political aspects of the struggle (para. 5);

(b) the prospects for South Vietnamese  
military success, assuming a continuation of US aid  
at approximately present levels (paras. 15-19, 28); and

(c) the extent to which factors in the South  
Vietnamese political situation may limit the achievement  
of the US-aided South Vietnamese military objectives  
(paras. 28-29).

Letter to General Wheeler, Chief of Staff, US Army, from  
Mr. McCone, re draft NIE on South Vietnam

O/NE: SKent:fd (drafted 28 February 1963)

STAT

CONCUR:

  
Deputy Director/Intelligence

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Copy was also sent to Major General Victor H.  
Krulak, USMC, Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency  
and Special Activities, The Joint Chiefs of Staff